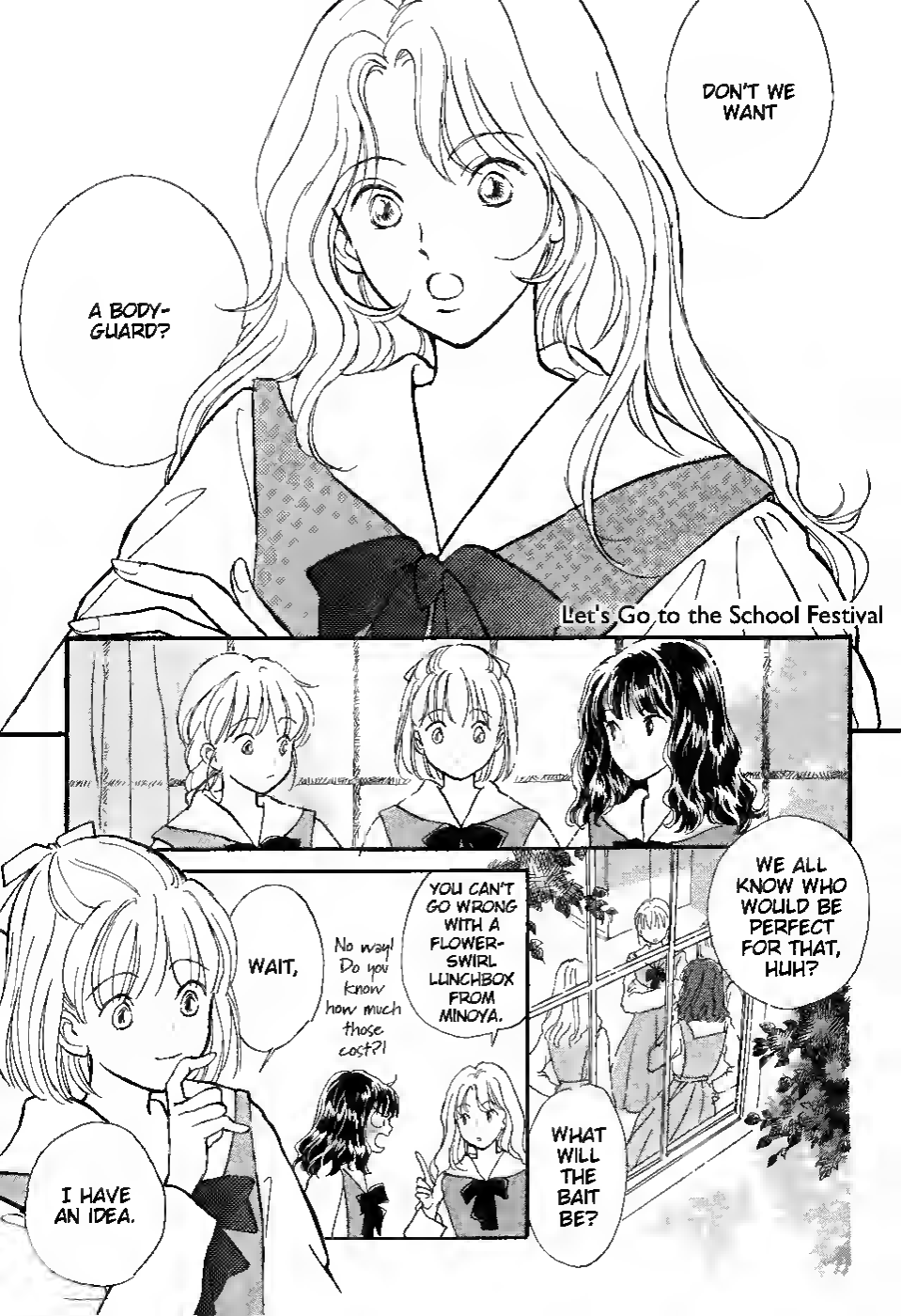
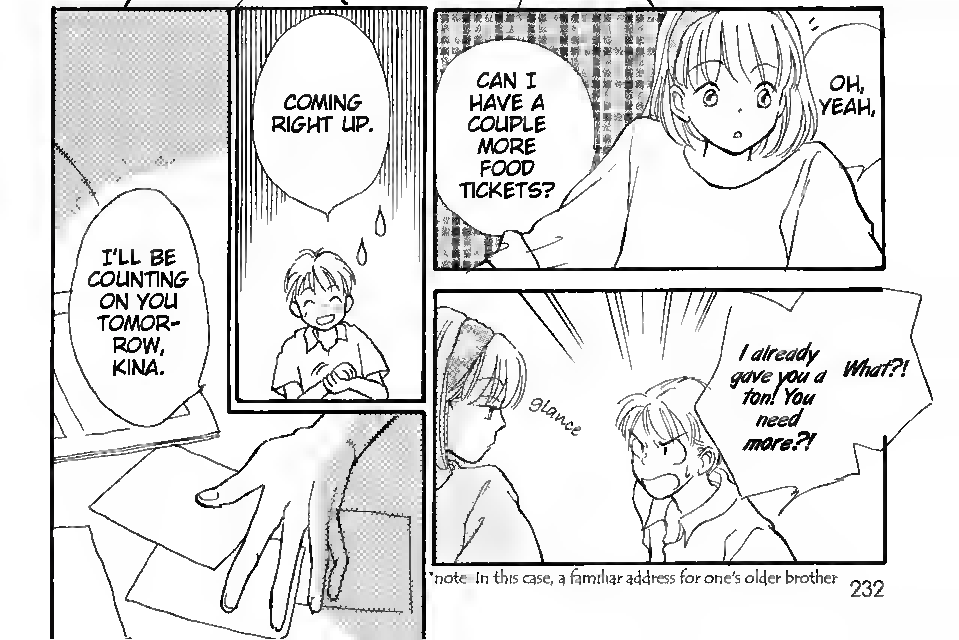

DON'T WE WANT
A BODY-GUARD?
Let's Go to the School Festival
WE ALL KNOW WHO WOULD BE PERFECT FOR THAT, HUH?
WHAT WILL THE BAIT BE?
YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH A FLOWER-SWIRL LUNCHBOX FROM MINOYA.
No way! Do you know how much those cost?!
WAIT,
I HAVE AN IDEA.

THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL AT FIRST HIGH?
NOT INTERESTED.
Turned her down flat.
perk
OH, THAT'S TOO BAD. WE HAVE MORE FOOD TICKETS THAN WE CAN USE. GUESS SOME ARE GOING TO GO TO WASTE.
WAIT, YAMAGISHI.
GOT HER! ♪
WE WOULDN'T WANT THOSE TICKETS TO GO TO WASTE, WOULD WE?

Let's Go to the School Festival

Whooo!
Guess it's worth it to send you to Shouka after all!
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE PAYING MY TUITION, ONII-CHAN*.
NACCHAN! THAT'S YOUR FRIEND WITH THE BRAIDS, RIGHT? WOO-HOO! ♡
THERE'S TAKE!... NACCHAN...
DON'T LET THAT ONE GET AWAY! WHO ELSE IS COMING?


COMING RIGHT UP.
I'LL BE COUNTING ON YOU TOMOR-ROW, KINA.
CAN I HAVE A COUPLE MORE FOOD TICKETS?
OH, YEAH,
glance
I already gave you a ton! You need more?!
What?!

*note In this case, a familiar address for one's older brother

smooch
NIGHT-NIGHT,♡ MARIE-CHAN.
Cut it out!
You'll get it all gross!
YOU HAVE BIG FISH LIPS,
SO I BET SOME GOT ON MY FACE. BARF!
HEY, IT'S NOT LIKE I KISSED YOU!
...OF COURSE IT IS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SAY WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE.
JUST GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM ALREADY.
HMM?
HEY! IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK TO YOUR BIG BR--
WHY DON'T YOU, THEN?
That would eliminate your illusions about what it's like there.
I WISH I COULD PUT THIS ON AND GO TO SHOUKA IN YOUR PLACE.

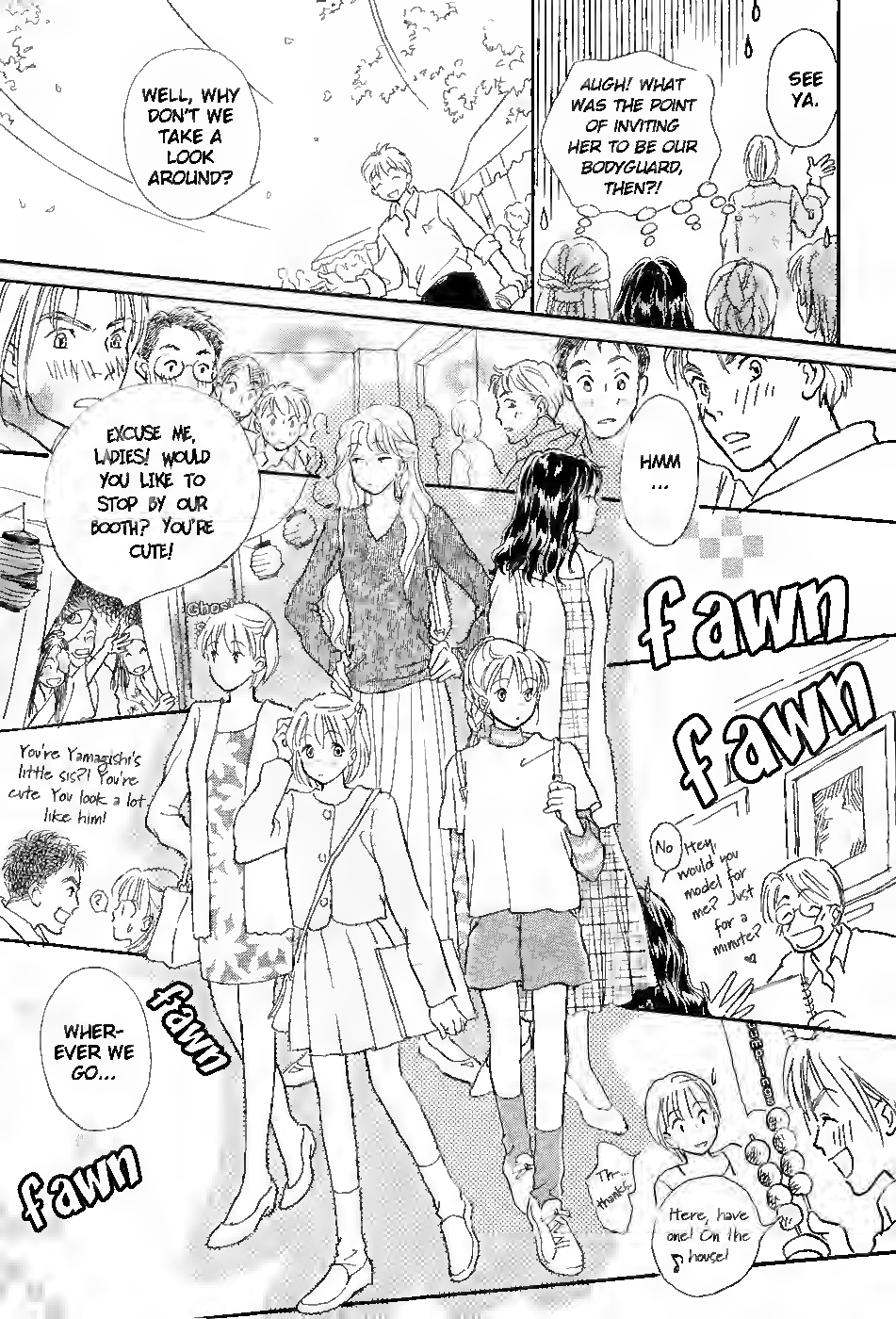
Oh, Kina-chan, ♡ why don't you all wear your uniforms to the festival tomorrow? ♡
Dream on.
HEY, WHAT SHOULD WE WEAR TOMOR-ROW?
HMM...
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON TO-MORROW? ARE YOU GOING SOMEWHERE?
splash
WHAT?! THAT SOUNDS AWESOME.
FIRST HIGH'S SCHOOL FESTI-VAL.

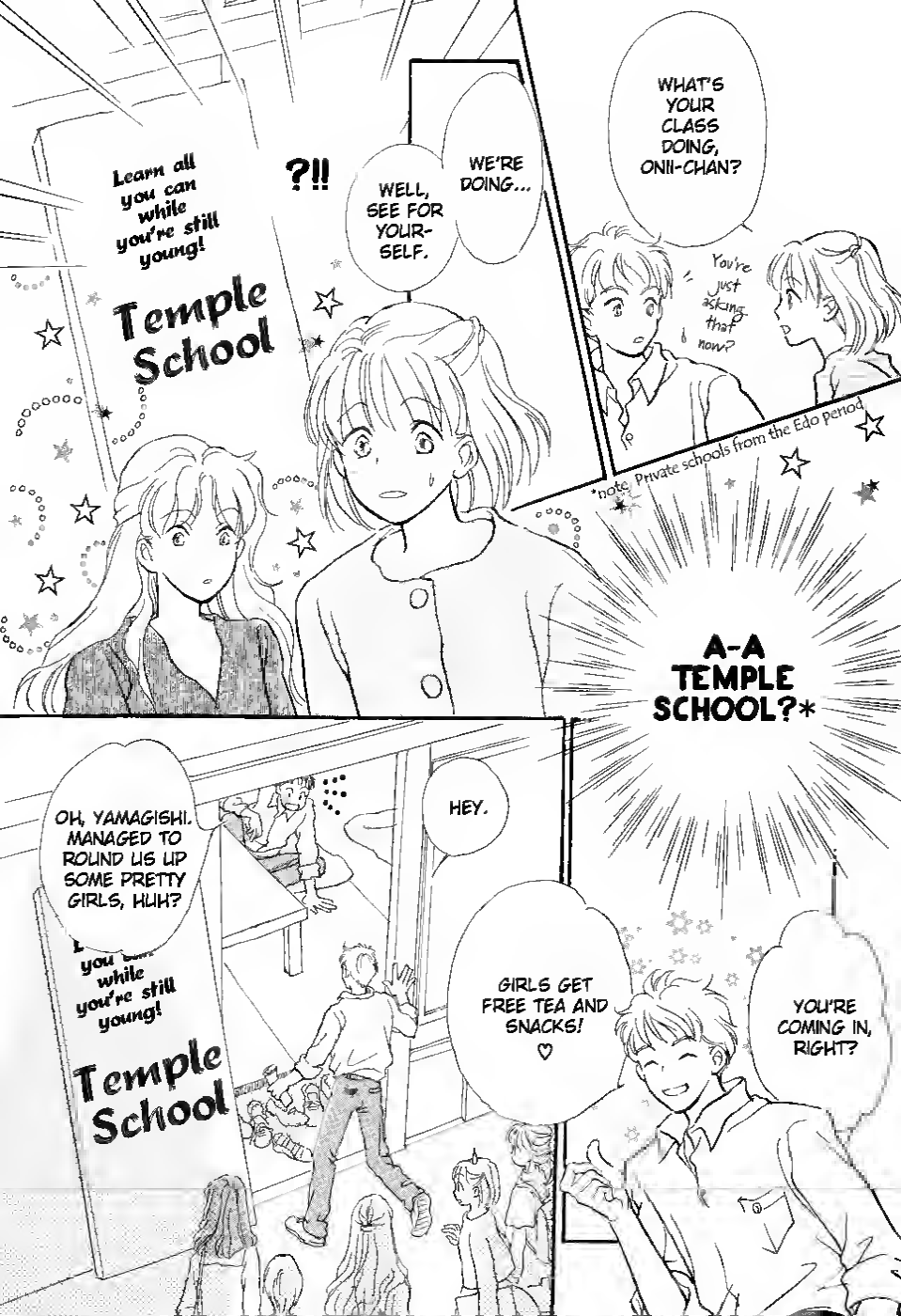
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO GOES THERE? ISN'T IT ALL GUYS?
KINA-CHAN'S BROTHER INVITED US.
WOW, HE GOES THERE? HE MUST BE SMART.
IF HE LOOKS LIKE HER, HE MIGHT BE CUTE. ♡
THEY'RE BOTH GOING TO SINGLE-GENDER SCHOOLS
HE'S GOT A SHAVED HEAD, THOUGH.
HAVE YOU MET HIM?
NO, BUT I HEAR HE'S ON THE BASEBALL TEAM.
So I bet he shaved his head
Ooh, he plays baseball! ♡
The crown of victory shines for you!
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO MANAGE A BASEBALL TEAM.
WE'D GO TO THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TOURNAMENT AT KOSHIEN STADIUM BUT LOSE TO PL GAKUEN* IN THE FINALS!
AH! THE TEARFUL SECOND-PLACE FLAG!
Is there even a flag for second place?
WHY WOULD THEY LOSE TO PL...?
IT'S A MORE REALISTIC DREAM.
*note: A real school in Osaka known for excelling at baseball.

WANT TO GO WITH US THEN, SAYA-CHAN?
HUH?! YOU WOULDN'T MIND?
"OUR SUMMER IS OVER..."
Come back to Earth!
Hey!
GIVES THE PITCHER A HANDFUL OF DIRT FROM THE STADIUM, AND SAYS,
Key point
IN THE FOURTH INNING, THE CAPTAIN
SCORE!
DON'T COME CRYING TO US IF YOU PASS OUT.
HEY, NO SWIMMING IN THE BATH.
splash
gliiide
DON'T WORRY...
bang
ba-bang
AREN'T YOU A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT GOING IN A GROUP OF JUST GIRLS?
HEY, EVEN THOUGH THERE WILL BE A LOT OF OUTSIDERS THERE, IT'S STILL A FESTIVAL AT AN ALL-BOYS SCHOOL, RIGHT?
High School Festival

WE HAVE A BODYGUARD.
OH, 'SCUSE ME.
wham!
ONII-CHAN!
YOU'RE LATE.
SORRY, SOME FRIENDS CAUGHT ME ON MY WAY HERE.
badum
EVERY-ONE, THIS IS MY BIG BROTHER.
...OH. UM, HI. I'M HER BROTHER.
After begging and pleading me to bring my friends, this is how you greet them?
MORON.

KAZA-MA-SAN,
HELLO.
HANA-DA-SAN,
THIS IS
TAKEI-SAN,
Whoaaa.
IGARASHI-SAN,
I'm in heaven
HELLO.
HELLO.
Heh heh
YOU CAN TELL THEY'RE RELATED! THEY BOTH HAVE DROOPY EYES.
HE DOESN'T HAVE A SHAVED HEAD AFTER ALL...
I'm a little disappointed, I guess
OH. SURE.
Though we did buy pamphlets, too
YOU'RE GOING TO SHOW US AROUND, RIGHT?
AND MISHI-MA-SAN.
I'm hungry
GURK?
THIS GIANT GIRL GOES TO SHOUKA, TOO?
Huh?!
I'M GOING TO THE CAFETERIA.


WELL, WHY DON'T WE TAKE A LOOK AROUND?
ALIGH! WHAT WAS THE POINT OF INVITING HER TO BE OUR BODYGUARD, THEN?!
SEE YA.
EXCUSE ME, LADIES! WOULD YOU LIKE TO STOP BY OUR BOOTH? YOU'RE CUTE!
HMM ...
fawn
fawn
You're Yamagishi's little sis?! You're cute. You look a lot like him!
Hey, would you model for me? Just for a minute? ♥
WHER-EVER WE GO...
fawn
fawn
Th... thanks.
Here, have one! On the ♪ house!


WHAT'S YOUR CLASS DOING, ONII-CHAN?
You're just asking that now?
WE'RE DOING...
?!!
WELL, SEE FOR YOUR-SELF.
Learn all you can while you're still young!
Temple School
*note: Private schools from the Edo Period
A-A TEMPLE SCHOOL?*
HEY.
OH, YAMAGISHI. MANAGED TO ROUND US UP SOME PRETTY GIRLS, HUH?
GIRLS GET FREE TEA AND SNACKS! ♡
YOU'RE COMING IN, RIGHT?
you while you're still young!
Temple School

WASEDA!!
LET'S SING THE SCHOOL SONGS OF THE 6 BIG TOKYO UNIVERSITIES!!
WASEDA!!
WASEDA!!
COME ON IN! DON'T BE SHY.
HEY! LEMME HAVE SOME CUSHIONS!
SIT, SIT!
HERE,
THE ATMOSPHERE IN HERE IS SO THICK...
WASEDA!!
Ork!
You did?
HUH? OH, THEY STINK? I FIGURED.
WE BORROWED THEM FROM THE JUDO CLUB.
TH-... THE MATS...
*note A prestigious university, its main campus is in Tokyo
.....
IT STILL SMELLS?
Meant for a bathroom
rustle
HEY, OPEN ANOTHER AIR FRESHENER, WOULD YA?
Ohh-ha-ha

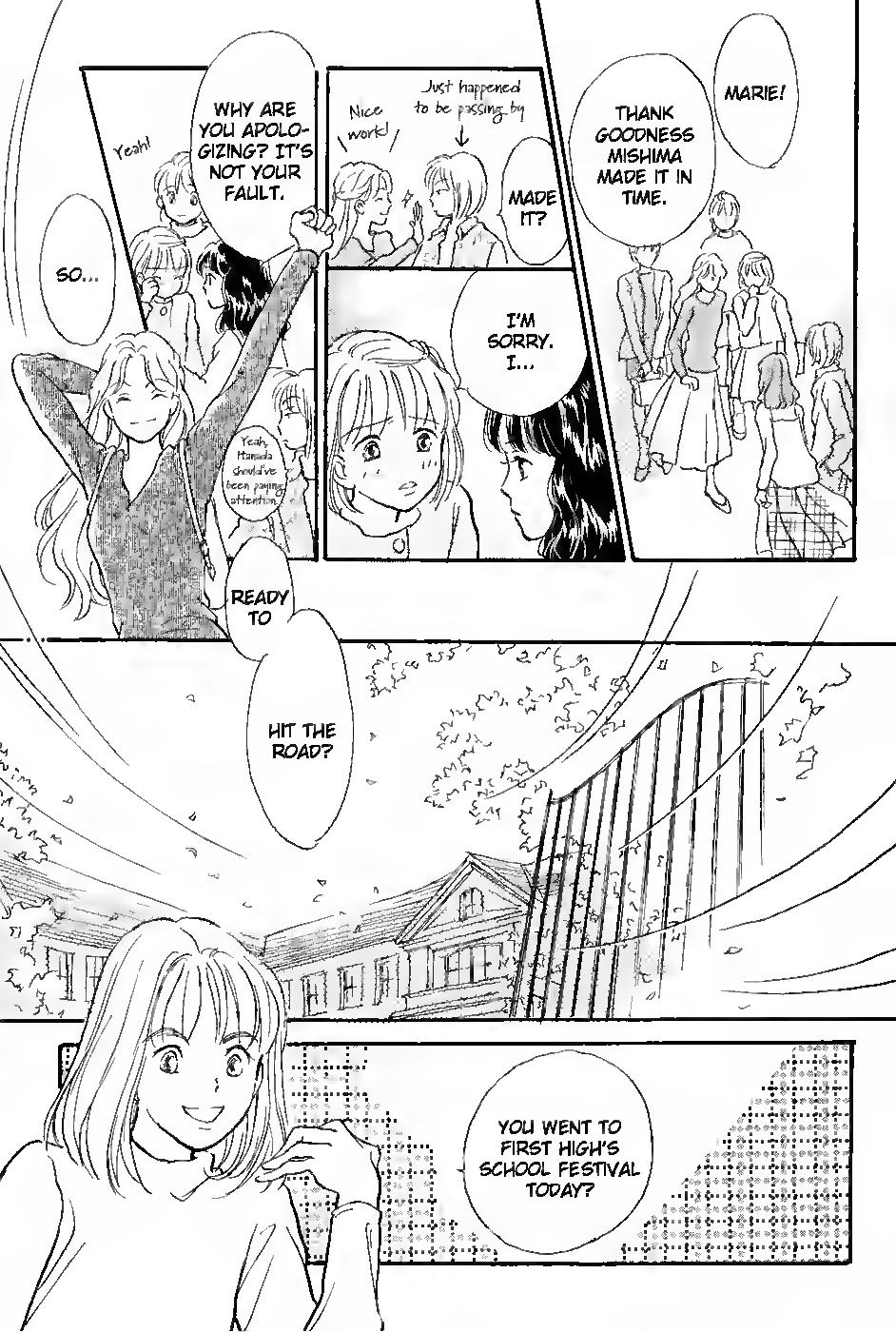
ENGLISH? MATH? PHYSICS?
WELL, WHERE SHOULD WE START?
HUH?
U—UM.
WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?
WE'RE HAPPY TO COME TUTOR YOU ANYTIME!
sigh
BOYS AREN'T EVEN ALLOWED IN THE DORMS. GEEZ.
WHY DO WE HAVE TO DO TRIGONOMETRY AT ANOTHER SCHOOL'S FESTIVAL?
And snacks!
Here's your tea!
*note "Kinoko No Yama" (*Mountain of Mushrooms*) are mushrooms made of chocolate and biscuits
IT'S A LITTLE EARLY, BUT WANT TO CALL IT A DAY?
I'M KINDA BEAT.

Hahal That would be embarrassing!
Should we have her paged?
WHERE'S MISHIMA?
THAT PIG...
Is she still eating?!
WHAT'S WITH THIS GUY?
UM... HANADA-SAN, WAS IT?
WHOA, YOU'RE CUTE UP CLOSE, TOO.
Gurk!
HEY, YOU.
blab
AHAHA!
IT'S ALL TOTALLY INNOCENT, I PROMISE.
YAMAGISHI CAN VOUCH FOR US.
OH, IT'S NOT THAT KIND OF MOVIE, DON'T WORRY.
UM...
I'M THE HEAD OF THE FILM CLUB,
AND I'D LOVE IT IF YOU COULD BE IN THIS MOVIE WE'RE FILMING.
GET YOUR FRICKIN' HAND OFF ME!
blab
blab
blab

...UH-OH.
OH? WHERE'S MARIE?
Not taking "no" for an answer
HEY, WHY DON'T YOU COME TO OUR CLUBROOM WITH ME?
tug
JUST TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT, IF NOTHING ELSE.
WE CAN WORK AROUND YOUR SCHEDULE!
JUST GIVE IT A READ! I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE IT.
HOW ABOUT IT? WE'VE GOT A GREAT SCRIPT.
I'M SORRY, my friends are waiting for me, so...
smack

THAT'S ENOUGH OUT OF YOU.
EEEE! YOU'RE SO COOL, MISHIMA!!
WH-
WHAT THE--
COME ON, LET'S GO HOME.

whisper
You owe me two flower swirl lunch boxes for this
OHHH...
...OH.
THEY'RE THE REAL DEAL...
NO, I KNEW YOU'D COME.
WERE YOU SCARED?
THE REAL THING...
WHOAAAA.
How it looks.
...HOW COLD...
SOMEONE GET A CAMERA! QUICK!
Ahhh
Okay!
WHAT A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES♡


MARIE!
THANK GOODNESS MISHIMA MADE IT IN TIME.
Just happened to be passing by
Nice work!
MADE IT?
I'M SORRY. I...
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING? IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
Yeah!
SO...
Yeah, Manaka should've been paying attention.
READY TO
HIT THE ROAD?
YOU WENT TO FIRST HIGH'S SCHOOL FESTIVAL TODAY?

HMMM.
WERE THERE ANY COOL GUYS THERE?
HOW WAS IT? TELL US ALL ABOUT IT!
MISHIMA TURNED OUT TO BE THE COOLEST PERSON THERE.
WELL,
Huh?
YOU FORGET ABOUT STUFF LIKE HOW SMELLY BOYS ARE.
LIVING IN A GARDEN OF GIRLS,
AND THEIR FACIAL HAIR.
THEIR LOUD, OBNOXIOUS VOICES...
THEIR DIRTY FACES ...
HOW HAIRY THEY ARE...
THEIR SHORT LEGS...

What are you talking about over there?!
HER LEGS ARE NICE AND LONG,
AND SHE DOESN'T SMELL.
AND HER SKIN IS PRETTY. She doesn't have facial hair, either
WHY WOULD I?!
MISHIMA DOESN'T HIT ON GIRLS.
I have some hair growing myself
I think girls can have that, too
THAT THEY EVEN HAVE HAIR GROWING HERE? ARE THEY EVEN HUMAN?!!
DID YOU KNOW
They're monkeys. Monkeys!
Cosplay
This is all I can manage right now...
She was like a knight protecting her princess! ♡
A KNIGHT?
STEPPED IN?
HE HE HE! WELL,
quiver quiver
BUT MOSTLY,
she was just so cool when she stepped in!!!
Zuka* World ♡
*note Short for Takarazuka, a well-known Japanese all-female musical theater company
WHERE'S THE HARM?
BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S A PROBLEM THAT THE TRIP TO THE BOYS' SCHOOL HAS ONLY DRIVEN THEM FURTHER INTO THE REALM OF THE ABNORMAL?
I KNOW I'M PARTLY TO BLAME HERE,
MARIE WAS TRAPPED BY SOME GUYS, AND...
flip

WHAT, NO "WHAT DO THEY SEE IN THAT REPTILE-WOMAN" TODAY?
SHE REALLY WAS THE TEENSIEST BIT COOL BACK THERE. MUCH AS IT PAINS ME TO ADMIT IT.
.....
...WELL,
SO, WE HAVE YOUR WORD ON THAT NOW! ♪
smirk
gasp
I'LL GO TELL HER THE GOOD NEWS.
HO HO HO!
... DARN IT!
THE QUEEN HAS FINALLY FALLEN!
Oh, Miii-shimaaa!
☆☆☆!
Kyahahahaha!

AND SO, ANOTHER DAY CAME TO A BOISTEROUS CLOSE AT SHOUKA WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

Let's Go to the School Festival
Alternate Version
I'LL GO SEE MY SISTER AND HER FRIENDS OFF.
Lucky you
Tch.
HMM?
MARIE-CHAN'S IN TROUBLE?!
Third-year
Second-year
--I MEAN, DON'T YOU THINK SO, SEMPAI?
HEY, CUT IT OUT!
YOU'RE BOTHERING HER--
SHE'S JUST SHY.
RIGHT, HANADA-SAN?
BUT...
UH ...
Come on, let's go somewhere nobody will bother us, so I can tell you more

HEY,
LET GO OF HER!
squeal
Omi-sama!
squeal
You're so cool, Omi-chan!
BEING RUDE TO A SENIOR, YAMAGISHI?
URGH ...
I ATE TOO MUCH.
lean
C'MON, LET'S GO.
...MM-HMM.
UM--
THANK YOU.
OH. SURE ...
bow
Serves you right

KINA'S BROTHER.
OH, THANKS FOR THE FOOD TICKETS,
Nice job today, Onii-chan!
I think you scored a ton of points with Marie, too!
Good for you! ♡
She's wearing a skirt!
DUH. IT'S PART OF OUR UNIFORM.
MISHIMA?
...HERE YOU GO.
IF YOU WANT A SHOT OF HER...
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THOSE PICTURES AGAIN?
WHO WAS THE TALL GIRL, AGAIN?

WHAAA ...?
...Sh-she looks cute in it.
YOU THINK SHE'S CUTE?
WELL, MORE PRETTY
THAN CUTE, I GUESS?
Aren't you getting a little ahead of yourself here, little sis?
Whoa!
Urgh, it would be weird to have Mishima as my sister-in-law
I WONDER IF I'M GETTING A COLD.
Thick
OR MAYBE SOMEONE'S TALKING ABOUT YOU.
sniffle
Hey, how about Nac-chan?
Hmmm She's too much like you. She feels more like a little sister to me.
Achoo!
The Secret Stairs volume 1 END

The Secret Stairs

chapter 19

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